

THE
Peace-Maker;
OR, TWO
Farewel-Sermons

PREACH'D AT
S^T. DUNSTONS

In the West, London, August the 17th
1662.

By WILLIAM BATES D.D. late
Preacher of the Gospel there.

2 Cor. 13. 11.

Finally Brethren, farewell; Be perfect, be of good
comfort; be of one minde; live in peace, and the
God of love and peace shall be with you.

Printed in the year, 1662.





TO THE READER.

Christian Reader.



These two ensuing Sermons, being taken by the careful hand of a ready Writer, and a very good friend of the Reverend Authors, to prevent abuse by imperfect Copies (which we hear are coming forth) they are exposed to publick view; and if we may estimate them by the worth of the Author, and seasonableness of the subject, we cannot imagine but that they will be much valued when they come abroad; seeing they are not only his last words, but in that they present to all men such a pattern of peace, as
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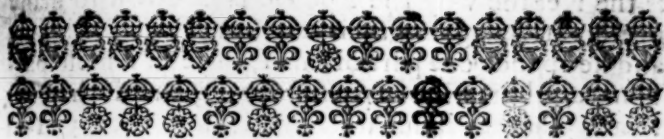
The Epistle, &c.

the God of peace, and the necessity of following peace with all men, in a way of holiness, without which no man shall see God. We need not mention the vast difference betwixt hearing and reading, or the lustre lost in Printing, which words had in delivering neither how neatly they might have been cloathed if sent abroad by the Author; all that we shall say, is, thou hast them in such a dresse as they were clad with in their first delivery: and be they read with as good affection, as they were preached, and heard, through the Spirits assistance will not prove as a dead letter.

Farewell.

N. D.

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SERMON I.

Heb. 13. 20, 21.

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



Twould give light to these words, if you consider the scope and design of the Apostle in this Epistle to the *Hebrews*, the sum of which is, He writes to them, that he might animate their spirits against *Apostacy from the Doctrine of the Gospel*; they were liable to this upon a double account: (1) Partly in respect of those *Persecutions* to which they were exposed; for the *Jews* were filled with a brutish zeal for the Ceremonies of the Levitical Law, and express the greatest rancour against those, who left *Moses* to follow *Christ*. This

is the Reason why the Apostle lays down so many preservatives against their revolting from Religion; and he spends one part of this Epistle in a most passionate exhortation to perseverance, and doth in the tenth Chapter insinuate himself into them; You have already tasted the first-fruits of affliction, *vers.* 34. *You took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in your selves, that you have in Heaven a better, and an enduring substance.* This is that temper that Martyrs have express, who have not only parted with their goods, but with their lives for the Gospel: When they came to the Stake, they would not so much as shed a tear to quench those flames, wherein they should ascend to God as in a fiery Chariot, *You took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in your selves, that you have a better and an enduring substance.* Thus he insinuates himself, by representing what they had done, to encourage them to perseverance; and partly he fortifies them against *Back-sliding*, by those terrible judgments which he threatned against *Revolters*, as you may read, *chap. 6, & 7.* (2) As they were liable to this Apostacy upon the account of *Persecution*, so upon the account of the unsettledness and instability of their own spirits. There were several of those who had given up their names to Christ, who did compare the Ceremonies of the Law with the purity of the Gospel: Now the Apostle, to secure them from this mixture, his great design is to represent the vanity and ineffectiveness of all the Ceremonial Law, and to express and prove the vertue and efficacy of the Lord Jesus his death, which was the substance of all the shadows. And this takes up one great part of his discourse with them. Now

Now in these two verses he sums up, by way of Recapitulation, all that which he had discoursed of at large; and in them you may observe these two things:

(1) A Description of God, to whom he addresses this prayer.

(2) The Substance of the prayer it self.

The *Description of God*, that he amplifies by these two things: (1) From the Attributes and Qualities of God, (if I may so express it) *Now* (saith he) *the God of peace.* (2) From the effects of his power and love, *That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep.* And these Titles, they are not here set down to adorn his discourse, meerly as an ornament, but they have all a peculiar efficacy, as to the obtaining of the request which here he makes for them.

I shall begin with the first, the *Description of God*, from that Attribute. (*Now the God of peace*) The Title that is used in the *Old Testament* frequently is this, [*The Lord of Hosts*] but in the *New* he is called, *The God of peace.* There were darker representations of the mercy and love of God then, the more full discoveries of his grace were reserved til the coming of Christ: Their discoveries under the *Old Testament* were but as the *Day-star*, which usher'd in the *Sun of Righteousness.* Now this Title of the *God of peace* imparts two things.

(1) That he is the *Author of peace*, and works it.

(2) That he *loves and delights* in peace.

First, That he is the *Author of it*: And if you consider *Peace* in all its notions and kinds, it is a

fruit of God, and that which descends from him. (1) *Peace in Nature* is the harmony that is between all the parts of the world, the union that is between the dis-agreeing Elements, this is from God; for without him, the whole Creation would presently disband, and return to its first Chaos of confusion. (2) *Civil Peace*, which is among the Societies of men; that which is so amiable and lovely, and which needs no other foil to commend it, and set off its lustre, than the miseries of War; this Peace comes from God also: When there is a subjection to just Laws, this is from God. Every rash hand is able to make a wound, or cast a fire-brand; but it is only the *God of Peace* that is able to heal breaches, to allay those storms that are in a Nation. You know, those showers which render the earth fruitful, descend from Heaven, from God; so all the counsels of peace descend from above: The fiery exhalations ascend from the earth, counsels of war and disturbance proceed from the devilish hearts of men. Or (3) If you consider that *Rational Peace*, which is in the spirits of men, *i. e.* when the understanding exercises a coercion and restraint over our licentious appetites, when all our inferior Faculties are under the Empire and conduct of Reason; this proceeds also from God: For, since the fall, there is a great deal of tumult, many riots and disorders in the soul of a man. *Reason* hates a bad *Guide*; and our *Appetites*, those are *evil instruments*, and do many times hurry Reason from its regular actions. But (4) much more, if you consider *Spiritual peace*, that peace doth not only import an agreement of a man within himself, but the agreement of the

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the Soul with God. This is the fruit of the Spirit; and it is onely God that is able to convey this peace to us. And upon a particular account this Title is given to him, by way of eminency and propriety; as,

(1) He is alone able to allow and dispence this peace to us; for, all our sins are injuries committed against him, against his Crown and Dignity; all the Arrests of Conscience are made in the name of God, and therefore it is only he that can speak peace. As in the *Civil State*, it is an Act of Supremacy to give a pardon; only he that can condemn is able to speak a pardon, so, it is that God that is our Judge, provoked and incensed by us, he that hath a judicial power to cast body and soul into hell-fire, is alone able to speak peace, and pass a Pardon for us in the Court of Heaven: and this is experienced by a wounded spirit; it is just with such a person as it is with a *Malefactor*, who stands condemned at the Bar, he cannot receive encouragement from any of his Spectators, til the *Judge* speak peace to him: So, if an Angel from heaven should come and speak to a wounded Spirit, it were impossible, unless God did order, command, and dispence it, that the spirit should receive any peace, because our sins are immediately committed against him.

(2) He is alone able to reveal and discover it. There is nothing harder in the world, than to calm and quiet a disturbed conscience, it must be the same power that makes light to spring out of darkness, that must cause a cheerful serenity in a dark and disconsolate soul. I know there is nothing more easie than that *false peace* which is so universal in the world;

for the most amongst us cheat themselves with *presumption*, instead of *peace with God*, and *security* instead of *peace with conscience*: but that peace which is solid and true can only be revealed by God himself. We have an instance of this in *David*, (*Psal.* 51) although *Nathan* had told him from God, *Thy sin is pardoned*; yet notwithstanding he saith, *Make thou me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce*. He stil addresseth himself to God, that he would cause him to hear the voice of pardon and reconciliation, for his soul could not be quiet by the voice of the Prophet. There is so much infidelity in the soul of a man, that when he comes to take a view of his sins in all their bloody aggravations, only the Spirit of God himself is able to allay the terrors of the conscience: And this he doth by an overpowering light, when he doth in an imperative and commanding manner silence all the doubts of the soul, and establish it in peace with God. Certainly he that shall but consider the terrors, the faintings, the paleness of a wounded conscience, when you shall see a person dis-relish all the things of the world upon this account, *Fearing lest God is his enemy*; when all discourses that are addressed to him are ineffectual, and but like warm cloath to a dead carcase, cannot inspire any heat into him. Oh! this shews, only God is able to reveal peace. So *Job*, *If he hide his face, who is able to be at peace?* There needs no other fury to complete the misery of a man, than his own accusing conscience, Conscience is a verier devil than the devil himself, and able more to torment and lash the creature. Therefore, if that be
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once awakened, 'tis only God, to whose tribunal conscience is liable, which is able to speak peace to the soul. Now you see in what respect this Title, [*The God of peace*] is attributed to him, as he is the *Author* and worker of it.

2. As he loves and delights in peace. This is that which is so pleasing to him, that he adopts those into the line of Heaven who are *Peace-makers*, for *they shall be called the Children of God*, *Mat. 5. 6.* This characterizes persons to be his children, to be ally'd to him. God, he only delights in the reflection of *his own Image*; for those things that we admire in the world, and delight in, do not affect his heart: *He delights not in the strength of the horse; he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.* Nothing attracts his eye and heart, but his own *similitude* and *resemblance*; and therefore, where he sees *peaceable dispositions*, this is that which indears the soul to him, and makes it amiable in his eyes. You may judge of his *delight* in peace by this, it is that grace which in an especial manner prepares us for communion with him; for, we can never really honour nor enjoy him, unless we bring to him those dispositions, which (if I may so speak) are in himself. And therefore it is no wonder that those have little *peace of conscience*, who make so little *conscience of peace*. You know, when God appeared to *Elijah*, he did not appear in the *Storm*, nor in the *Fire*, but in the *small still voice*, and when *Elisba* was transported with *anger*, he was fain to allay that passion by *Musick*, that so he might be prepared for the holy motions of the Spirit; he

he call'd for an Instrument, and then the Spirit moved in him. I bring it for this end, to shew, how God *delights in peace*, and he will only maintain communion with those that are of calm and peaceable spirits. So much way as we give to rash anger, so much proportionably do, we let in the Devil, and cast out the *God of peace*.

Now, the reason why this Title is given to God is upon a double account, partly with respect to the *Blood of the everlasting Covenant*, which made peace between God and us; partly with respect to the *Covenant itself*, which is founded in that Blood.

(1) In respect of the *Blood of the Everlasting Covenant*. For, it was the blood of Christ that hath sprinkled Gods Throne, and made peace in heaven. You shall read therefore, when Christ came into the world, 'tis said (*Luke 2. 14.*) that the heavenly Host appeared and sang, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, &c.* Since the *Fall*, God and man are *enemies*, there is a reciprocal enmity between God and Man, God hates the Creature as it is unholy, and man hates God as he is just, the avenger of sin, the Author of the Law: Now, *Christ* was the *Umpire* that composed this difference, he was *God and Man* in one person, and so being ally'd to *both*, he was a fit person to reconcile both. He was (as *Job* speaks) a *Days-man* between us. He hath paid every farthing that was due: for he did not compound with God, but paid the utmost that was due to him. He it is that hath reconciled us to God by the power of his Spirit, in changing and renewing our natures and creating in us those dispositions

positions which are like to God ; so that 'his Blood is the foundation of this peace. And now, God appears to us, not as a consuming fire, but as a refreshing light, full of calmness, serenity and peace towards us. Christ he brought more honour to God by his obedience, than we brought dishonour by our transgression; and therefore without any injury to God, he might be at peace with us. You know, all our sins were but the acts of *finite creatures*, and only *infinite* in regard of the *object* against whom they were committed. But the Blood of Christ was of *infinite value* in regard of the *subject* ; for, he was God, and the enriching union of the Deity conveyed such value and worth to his Blood, that he was able to appease God, and not only to free us from condemnation, but to make us the favourites of God. We are not only pardoned, but preferr'd upon the account of his Blood.

(2) He is the *God of peace*, as with respect to the Blood of Christ, which is the purchase of peace; so with respect to the *Covenant* which is made between God and us (*through the blood of the everlasting Covenant*) There are three sorts of *Covenants* amongst men, some are *Covenants of Friendship and Amity*, some are *Covenants of Trade and Commerce*, and some are *Covenants of Assistance and Help*. Now all these qualifications meet in this *Covenant*, which is made between God and Believers: It is a *Covenant of Peace and Friendship*; for now we stand upon terms of amity with God, *Those who were strangers and enemies, are now reconciled*. And there is between God and us perfect peace, there is a *League* (as the Scripture

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speaks between God and the Creature. It is a Covenant of *Trade*, there is now a way opened to Heaven, we may now ascend to God in duties of holiness, and God descend to us by the excitations of his grace, and influences of joy. And 'tis a Covenant of *assistance*, for he promises not only to give us the reward of the Covenant, but to secure unto us the Condition ; he promises to enable us to discharge the conditions of *Faith* and *Repentance*. Now upon this account, of that Covenant which is founded in the blood of Christ, he is the *God of peace* to his people.

[1 Use] Is by way of *Conviction*. This may discover to us how distant their temper is from God, who are *enemies to peace* : We unman our selves, we unchristian our selves, so far as we are opposite to this blessed temper of peace. Certainly, as disturbed water cannot make any reflection unto us of that face that looks into it, so when our Spirits are disturbed by animosities, exasperations heats and divisions, 'tis impossible for us to see the Image of God, as he is the God of peace. And certainly, there is no more doleful consideration in the world than this, That *Man*, whom God made a sociable creature, who hath all the engagements and endearments laid upon him, which may cause him to live in peace and gentleness towards those who are of the same nature with him, yet that in fierceness our heats should exceed those of the most salvage creatures. Man comes into the world naked, and altogether unarmed, as if he were designed for the *Picture of peace* ; but could you look into the hearts of men, you would find there such tumults, divisions,

divisions, such seeds of enmity against their fellow-creatures, that *Tigres* and *Lions* are calm and peaceable in comparison of them. Now, how is this distant from the temper of the *God of peace*? 'Tis very strange to consider, that when promises are made to bury all differences, as rubbish under the foundation, that nevertheless the great work of many persons should be, only to revive those former animosities, to make those exasperations fresh and keen upon their own spirits: but is this to imitate the *God of Peace*? These, to promote divisions and disturbances amongst us, cloath their enemies with the *Livery* of *shame* and *reproach*, that so they may be baited by their fury; that make it their design to represent that party, which they think is dissonant from them, with the most odious appearances, (you know this is the old Art) and those *showers of calumnies* which are in the world, they usually precede the *storm of persecution*. The devil was first a *Liar*, and then a *Murderer*; and those who are of his seed, they follow his Art. In the primitive times, all the Persecutions of the Heathens arose from the reproaches of Christians; so it is now. It is an easie thing to blast the name of those persons, who are design'd for ruine. But if the contending Parties would consider, (if I may call one Party *contending* which is only liable to Penalties, and is resolved to bear them patiently) how *unlike* this is to that *God of peace*, me-thinks it should allay the rancour that is in mens spirits, and make an attonement between all the differences that is amongst them.

(2) If only peace come from God, you may from hence take a trial of that peace that is within you, (for hitherto I have been only discoursing of Civil peace) whether it be the effect of this *God of peace*. I know nothing more common in the world than *presumption*; there is a *false peace*, which doth not arise from the *knowledge of a mans happiness*, but from the *ignorance of his misery*: Peace, which is only like a Torch to shine in the night, or like *Players*, that glitter only by Torch-light; so is the false peace men cherish in their bosom, meerly upon this account, because they do not bring their souls to the light of the Word, they never had it from this God of peace; because,

(1) God never speaks peace to a soul, but in the way of holiness and obedience: And therefore you shall find 'tis the counsel of the Scripture, *Acquaint thy self with God, and be at peace*. Our peace is found in the way of duty: and there are none who are more blessed with the peace of conscience, than those who with the greatest fervour, frequency, and delight, maintain communion with God in holy Duties: For, as friendship among men is cherished and preserved by visits and conversations, so, our peace with God is preserved by those visits we make to Heaven in prayer.

(2) That peace that comes from God, alwaies causes in us a war with sin; for God's Covenant with us is Offensive and Defensive, and therefore it is impossible any person should have true and solid peace, that waking tranquility of soul, which is the reward of holiness and obedience, that entertains sin; for every sin thou dost wilfully
commit,

commit, 'tis an act of hostility against God, 'tis that which makes him thy enemy, and makes thee an enemy to him. As *Jehu* said, *What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?* So, what peace can there be, so long as thou dost indulge thy self in sin, and make it thy business to gratifie thy outward senses, though it be to the displeasure of God? 'Tis the greatest mercy in the world to rob such persons of their peace, and to discover to them their danger; they are only capable of true peace, by the knowledge of that which is false. Therefore bring yourselves to this trial, whether or no doth that peace which now you please your selves in, cause in you an eternal hatred of sin? doth it set you at a distance from your most beloved lusts? Then it is that peace that springs from God. The greatest part of the world are in a state of *war* with God, though they do not feel the effects of that war. True indeed, God doth not always draw the sword, either of Famine, Pestilence, or War, against a Nation, and yet they may be acting in a most hostile way against God: So for a person, God may not blast thy estate, or send diseases upon thy person, or raise a tumult in thy conscience, and make a conspiracy of thy thoughts and passions against thy peace: thou maist be quiet within, and yet have war with God, because, as in the world, there may be a *Truce*, when there is no *Peace*, the War may still continue, though there be a *Truce* between two Princes: or rather there is not a *Truce* between God and the sinner,

but, as a Town that is besieged for many days, may not feel the battery of their enemy, because he is undermining them to blow them up at once; so God doth not many times make his battery against sinners, but he is undermining them, and the fall at the last will be dreadful, if there be not a composition.

[Use 2.] By way of Exhortation; Let me press you all to follow peace, it is a duty which the Gospelenjoyns with the greatest vehemency, with the greatest force of words and expressions. The Apostle, when he is to seal up his affection to them, he doth it with that prayer, (2 Thess. 3. 16) *Now the God of peace himself give you peace always, by all means*: What strange expressions! First, he gives you here the Title of *the God of peace*, and then he saith, [*Himself*] *The God of peace himself*. There's a great deal of force in that word; Peace is so excellent a blessing, and there is such an abhorrency in our corrupt nature to it, that it is only the *Lord himself* that is able to effect it: As if the Apostle had said, The Lord must bow the Heavens, he must come down *himself* to create peace among you; and to express the greater vehemency of his desire, he saith, *Give you peace always, by all means*. So another Scripture, pursue peace, *Follow peace with all men*, a word that imports our *pursuit* after it, though it *run* from us. This is the strain and tenor of the Gospel, and this becomes you as Christians. When Christ came to purchase our peace, he came as a Lamb, an Innocent and meek creature, *Behold the Lamb* of God. When the holy Spirit descended to seal the priviledge of peace to us, he descended

descended in the form of a Dove ; a gaul-less creature in whom there is no rancor nor bitterness. What a strong engagement should this be upon all of us, to pursue and promote peace ? And for your encouragement consider,

(1) That in the times of the Gospel all the promises, do as it were empty themselves into this blessing, the blessing of peace. Thus *Isa. 11. 6.* you shall find there a gracious promise, respecting the times of the Gospel, *The Wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid, and the Calf, and the young Lion and the Fatling together, and a little child shall lead them: and the Cow and the Bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together, and the Lion shall eat straw like the Oxe.* That which I observe from thence is this, that God here promises to cause an universal peace and unity under the Gospel, though it be as difficult as to persuade the most disagreeing natures to a peaceable cohabitation. For here the Scripture instances in those Creatures, between which there is the most natural, and therefore the most fierce animosities. The Lord will reconcile men, though their differences be never so great. What is too hard for the God of peace to effect ? Is not God of infinite power, of infinite love ? then it should quicken us to pursue peace. (1) By prayer to him, because he is able to effect it ; certainly that God that was able to bring Order into the World, when it was a meer lump and mass of Confusion, is able to bring peace and to unite our spirits. And it is observable, the greater our differences and divisions are, the more will the power of this God appear in reconciling them. 'Tis said in
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the Psalms, that *God's Throne is in darknes*, i. e. His ways of providence are very difficult for us to trace and find out: and therefore when our Divisions are at the highest, he is able by one word to allay the storm. This should encourage us in prayer. This is the course of God to glorifie himself, by putting a stop to the greatest Troubles, when nearest to us, and to work out one contrary by another. To give you some Instances, that so we may encourage our Faith, and quicken our Prayer to God for this blessing. Consider how still God hath made *difficulties the way for enjoyment*; for Instance, The promises that *Sarah* should be the Mother of a Child; but he made way for that by her dead womb: for all that numerous Progeny, which like the Stars of the Sky descended from her. That he first maimed *Jacob*, and then gave him the blessing. He brought *Joseph* from the Prison to a Princely Pallace. First *David* was harassed with troubles, and then his head was deck'd with the Imperial Crown. So if you look into the Kingdom of Christ, who would have thought that a few *Fishermen* should have advanced the Empire of Christ in the World; had you lived to have seen those despicable beginnings, when a few unlearned men were the Heralds and Preachers of Christ, how would this have caused you to fail and sink in your spirits? and yet the Gospel hath been preached in all the parts of the World, and that by a few *Fishermen*. The Providences of God are like those plated Pictures if you look one way upon them, there is the appearance of a Serpent; if you look on the other side, there's the appearance of an Angel. So here, many times God is pleased to suffer exasperations to go
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very high, that so his power may appear more eminent in the composure of them. He it is that enables the faith of his people to draw water out of the Rock, when the Fountain is dry : that makes meat to come out of the Eater, (as in *Sampson's Riddle*) that is able to bring a peaceable harmony out of devouring differences: and therefore it should quicken our prayers to him.

(2) To make us more serious in our endeavours after peace. Consider, what a dishonour it is to the Gospel ; that those that profess themselves Sons of the same God, Members of the same Christ, Temples of the same Spirit; should be at deadly jars one with another. It is strange & unnatural that *Lillies* should prove thorns to one another : that those who are *Saints in pretence*, should be Devils in practice to one another : that Gods Diamonds should cut one another; this is very strange, yet thus it is. But how especially, it is most sad, when *Religion* which should restrain and bridle our passions, is made fuel and insensitives of them : How far distant is it from the counsel of the Apostle, *Rom. 14. 10.* where he speaks concerning their lesser differences, *One values one day above another, another esteems every day alike*, what's his counsel? he speaks as a person that was fill'd with bowels and compassion : Oh, saith he, let not him that doth not esteem the day judge him that doth; *For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ*, there we shall appear all upon a level, stand upon equal ground, and receive our final doom from him : This therefore should calm our spirits. Why may there not be some differences in *judgment*, without division in *affection* ;

for it is as impossible that all judgments should be of the same extent, as all our faces to be of the same colour and figure. Therefore consider what an injury it is to our profession, how doth it obscure the glory of God, and lustre of our Religion?

(3) Doth not the *publick enemy* rejoyce over us, I mean the *Papists*? do they not warm themselves at the sparks of our divisions: for you know the old Maxim of *Divide and Reign*: Therefore it should compose our spirits, and quicken us to labour after union. *Unmortifi'd lusts* are thence, whence all Wars and enmities springs in the world. The Apostle *Paul*, when he would compose their differences, he doth not lay down Rules to decide their controversies, but corrects their secret passions, pride, self-seeking, revenge, &c. this being the seed of all disturbances in the Church: And although these lusts may not be conspicuous and visible to the eyes of men, yet they are certainly the fuel of our distempers.

The sum of all is this; Those that have the Spirit of God, they cannot but mourn and be sensible of these divisions. I know a great part among us are unconcern'd: some rejoyce, those that are rather buried in the affairs of the world and incumbered with much business, or those that are steeped in the pleasures of sense, are altogether unaffected with these things, and stand as *Newters*, dis-regarding all events: But the Saints of God cannot but mourn over them, when our divisions hinder the progress of the Gospel, and are serviceable to nothing but to the Kingdom of darkness. Therefore I beseech you, let what hath been spoken quicken

quicken you in your prayers to God, to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, (that's the least effect of our love and desires after peace) and by all endeavours to labour to bring back peace to us, that we may see that *Propheſie* fulfilled in our time, that *the Lord ſhall be one, and his Name one amongſt us.*

S E R M O N II.

Heb. 13. 20, 21.

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlaſting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wel-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

THe Apoſtle deſcribes God by the *effect's of his power and love*, [*That brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus*] The Reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead is one of the moſt transcendent teſtimonies of God's *love and power* towards us.

(1) Of his Love; becauſe as the *Anger* of God waſ that which crucifi'd our Saviour, ſo on the contrary, it muſt be his *Love* that ſhould raiſe and reſtore him. Chriſt, when he died, he looked upon God as an Enemy, as a Judge, and as thoſe Colours which we ſee conveyed to us are answerable to the Medium through which we ſee them; as,

if we look through a coloured glass, we see the object of that colour : So the Lord Jesus, when he was upon the Cross, looked upon God through the black cloud of our sins, and through the red cloud of his Father's wrath, and so died as a sacrifice to Divine Justice. But when he was raised from the grave, that was the testimony of God's love to him, and of his love to us ; for he died as our *Surety*, he was *arrested* for our *debt*, he was cast into the *Grave* as into a *Prison* : But by his *Resurrection* he was redeemed from Prison and Judgment. And therefore you shall find, when Christ was risen, he salutes his Disciples with this, *Peace be unto you*, (*Luk. 24. 31.*) There was the dawning of peace at the *Incarnation* of Christ, for then the Angels sung, *Peace upon earth*; but the compleat Sun-shine of peace was at his *Resurrection*, when he had made full and compleat satisfaction to God's Justice ; for this was a clearing of him before all the world, when God rais'd him from the grave. And in this respect it was very agreeable for the Apostle to say, *The God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus.*

(2) It was the effect of *Infinite Power*. You know, 'tis naturally impossible for a dead body to quicken it self, to revive ; but for the Lord Jesus, who had the load of the sins of all the Elect upon him, who was, as it were, secured in the grave by God's Justice and Power, for him to rise again : This must be an effect of *Infinite Power* in the great God. This raising of Christ, sometimes 'tis attributed to the *Son*, being *God* equal with the Father ; but here 'tis attributed to *God* : And therefore, when the Scripture would speak with the greatest magnificence of the

the Power of God, it expresses it thus, *That Power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead.* When Christ wrought deliverance for the lost world, (all those who were committed to his charge) This could be no less than the work of an Infinite Power. And upon this account also it is very proportionable to the design of the Apostle; for that Prayer he makes to God is for that, which only can be accomplished by *Infinite Love*, and *infinite Power*, i. e. to make the Christian Hebrews perfect in every good work to do his will.

I come to a further description. *He that brought again from the dead* [our Lord Jesus.] The Title of the Lord Jesus was only given to our Saviour after his Resurrection; he was called Lord before, and Jesus before; but these two Titles were never united til after his resurrection; *They came to see the place where the body of the Lord Jesus lay*; the reason was this, Because the Resurrection of Christ was a solemn Proclamation to the world, that Christ was the Son of God; 'tis true, this Title was given him immediately upon his Conception, but it was never compleatly declared to the world, til after his Resurrection; for before, Christ was a Prince in disguise, the beams of his Divinity was abated by the vail of his Humanity; but then he was declared by power to be the Son of God.

It follows. [*That great Shepherd of the Sheep.*] For the opening of this,

(1) We will consider this Title of Christ.

(2) The person for whom this Title relates.

First, This Title, [*The great Shepherd*] 'Tis a wonderful condescension in Christ, that he will take

upon him the Title of a *Shepherd*, that which rather expresses *Love* and *Care*, than *Power* and *Dominion*; yet he is pleased to assume this Title to express his affection to us. For the opening of it, wherein he appears to be the *great Shepherd*, I shall lay down these particulars.

(1) He is *great* in the *Dignity of his Person*; for he that is Lord of Angels, is become the *Shepherd of the sheep*; and the *humiliation of his Person* in this respect, is the *exaltation of his Office*: It is looked upon in the world as a mean and low employment, to have the care and inspection of a Flock; but now herein appears the love of Christ, he was pleased to become our *Shepherd*, that so he might secure and bring us to the Fold of Heaven, and there make us to feed upon those Pastures, and to drink of those Rivers of pleasure which flow from the presence of God.

(2) In the *derivation of his Authority*; that Authority which is communicated to him, whereby he is our *Shepherd*, and that is originally from God himself; it is not by any mediate deputation, but from God himself. He is our *Shepherd*, and hath a Title to his Flock upon a double account:

(1) They are committed to him as his *Charge* and custody, (*Joh. 6. 37, &c.*) All the Elect of the World were given by God the Father to Christ, not by way of *Alienation*, but by way of *Opigneration*, as so many pledges which he was to bring to grace and glory; and this Charge he doth most fully execute, for there is none missing of those committed to him, (2) They are given to him by way of *Reward* and *Recompence*, for all his Blood
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and Sufferings, (*Isa.* 53. 10.) The Lord Jesus put such a value on souls, that he purchased an interest in them by his own blood; and he thinks himself exceedingly recompenced for all his Pains on the Cross, Agonies in the Garden, Temptations in the Wilderness, &c. if souls will submit to his care. And here observe the course of Heaven, God would endear souls to Christ upon all reasons, by vertue of his command, and that charge he gives to them, and by vertue of his own purchase.

(3) If you consider the *extent* of his care and affection, for all the Saints of the world, those who are dispersed in all places, in all Ages, they are all his Flock; and therefore 'tis the Royalty of his Administration, (*Joh.* 10, 16.) *There shall be one Fold, and one Shepherd.* As Christ is the only *Catholick King*, so he is the only *Universal Bishop*; for all other shepherds have but particular portions of his Flock committed to their charge; and they should be such portions as they have regard to, and are under their inspection. And at the last day, all his sheep shall congregate together, and stand at his right hand. All the Saints of God that are now scattered, as so many Stars in the Firmament, shall be united in one Constellation, when they shall appear in glory before him.

(4) In respect of his endowments and qualifications, which fit him for the discharge of his Office. And

(1) Take notice of his affection and love to us, and that is the wonder of heaven and earth, *Christ laid down his life for his sheep*, (*Joh.* 10. 11.) This is strange; that Christ should be a *sheep for the slaughter*,

slaughter, that he might become our Shepherd; that he should be a Sacrifice, before he could take this office upon him: Other Sheep lay down their lives for the Shepherd, but Christ laid down his life for the Sheep. So great was his love, that it brought him from Heaven to *seek and find those that were lost*; he left a *Palace* to come to a *Wilderness*; a *Throne of Heaven*, to come to a *Fold* here upon Earth. We read of *David*, that he exchanged a *sheep-hook* for a *Scepter*; but Christ quite contrary, he chang'd a *Scepter* for the *Rod and Staff of a Shepherd*. It was said by one, There is nothing so conspicuous in Christ as the *prodigality of his love* to us. Oh! do but consider *how great love* that was, that should make him to die for us, that he might bring us home to his Fold. We were all of us like *erring Sheep*, who had straid from him, and fell to the *Lord of the soil* as strange Cattel: we were gotten into the possession of *the god of this world*; the Lord Christ would buy us off from thence: though we forfeited our *right in him*, yet he would not lose *his right in us*, but he laid down his life that he might reduce us to his Fold; that of *Wolves* he might make us *Lambs*, and fit us for the comforts of his presence.

(2) In respect of his *exact diligence and inspection over them*: When but one sheep went astray from his Fold, we read, he left the ninety and nine, and went and sought for that *One*, *Luk. 15.* where we have that Parable, to express the diligence and watchfulness of Christ over his sheep. There is no person, be he never so mean, never so obscure, though lost in the number and account of the world, if he be one of Christ's sheep, he is always under his inspection and

and watchfulness. We read of the *High-Priest*, that he carried the names of the *Tribes* upon his *Breast-plate*, the Lord Christ carries the names of all his sheep in his *Heart*; therefore, *Rev. 13.* speaking concerning the Saints, all that dwell upon earth, *whose names are writ in the book of life.* His diligence and care is so exact, that he hath all their names writ in his Book: He that tels the stars, counts their hairs, and alwaies exercises the most watchfull providence over them for good. You know sheep are either liable to *rage*, or *erring* and *wandring*; Christ's diligence is such, that he protects them from the *rage* of Satan, reduces them from all their *wandring*, and brings them home to himself.

(3) *In making proportionable all their services and sufferings to those degrees of strength which he gives to them, Isa. 40. 11. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.* Christ alwaies makes a proportion between the services, sufferings and strength he calls them to. He it is that with that tenderness speaks to *Peter, Peter lovest thou me? feed my lambs.* He hath provided for them the most ample & most satisfying nourishment, the Ordinances of the Gospel, the Word, the Promises, which are the Breasts of Consolation; these are all provided by him for his People. And in this respect he is the great Shepherd, for he doth not onely allow them means, but blesses the means to them: he is able to enlighten the dark mind, and he can make pliable the stubborn will, and he can spirituallize droffie affections, which all other shepherds in the world are not able to effect.

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(4) He is the great Shepherd, if you consider his *power to preserve them from danger*; not only those dangers which respect Satan, (for that fell under his care before) but those diseases to which they are liable, which threaten ruine: Other Shepherds possibly may cure diseases, but not defend them from danger. Christ it is that *gives eternal life to his sheep*, he begins the *life of holiness*, which though at present is but as a spark in the Sea, yet he keeps it alive till it shall break forth into a triumphant flame. That *life* that is encompassed with so many enemies, and liable to so many weaknesses, the Lord Jesus will *bring forth judgment to victory*, and will make them to be powerful over spiritual and eternal enemies.

The sum is this: The Lord Christ is so perfect a Shepherd, so complete, as to all the qualifications of that office, that the Prophet *David* breaks forth into exultation, (*Psal. 23.*) *The Lord is my Shepherd, &c.* and then afterwards expresses all those provisions which are made for him by God as a Shepherd, *He makes me to lie down in green Pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters.* So that you see, Christ, whether for diligence, love, tenderness, for preserving us from danger, for securing us to life eternal, he is only the *great Shepherd*; he is the God of shepherds, as well as the God of sheep, and all other shepherds are but inferior to him, and must be accountable to him for the souls of his sheep, which are more valuable than all the world.

It follows, *The great Shepherd [of the sheep.]* I shall not spend any time in making any resemblance between the people of God and the sheep: only,

(1) They are sheep in respect of their *Innocency*.
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You know, of all creatures the sheep are unarmed; other creatures, either they are armed with strength, or skin, or swiftnes, to guard themselves, and offend others; but the sheep hath neither the strength of the *Lion*, the craft of the *Fox*, swiftnes of the *Deer*, and of all creatures is most weak, inoffensive, and most liable to dangers & injuries. Of all persons, Gods people are most liable to danger, and when out of Christs protection, the weakest persons in the world.

(2) In respect of their *Meekness*. A sheep is an emblem of meekness, that's their temper, and therein they imitate Christ, who hath propounded himself to be their pattern, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly*; both these qualities are exprest by the Prophet, (*Isa. 11.*) where speaking concerning the times of the Gospel, saith, *The Lamb shall lie down with the Wolf*; now, where the Prophet expresses their *safety*, there he expresses their *innocency* and *meekness*. This is the reason why the Prophet saith, *For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*: because of all creatures most liable to injuries, that which doth least resent them: And, where ever the grace of Christ comes, it sweetens the most cruel nature, and polishes the most rough disposition, & makes them to be like *Christ, meek & lowly*.

3. In regard of their *profitableness*; for of all creatures, they are most profitable, the food, as to their flesh, the cloth, as to their fleece. And the people of God, however they are exposed to the contempts and injuries of the world, they are the most *profitable*, for, were it not for them, the whole frame of Nature would fall into pieces, the Stars would fall like leaves in Autumn, and all the Elements would fall into

confusion; we see it by one *Lot*, who kept showers of fire & brimstone from falling on *Sodom* til he was got out of it. And it is the people of God, for whom this frame of nature is continued, & when they are brought into the fold of Christ, the Justice of God will have a solemn triumph over all the world.

(4) As they are liable to *wandring*: Sheep are wandering creatures, and when strayed, not able to reduce themselves. And in this respect the people of God are sheep, they have a thousand allurements to draw them from the ways of God; and if God shou'd not guide them by his eye, 'tis impossible they should go in the way that leads to heaven. Therefore *David* saith, *I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant*, *Psal.* 119. 176. This shall suffice to make the Parallel & Resemblance of the people of God & sheep.

The second Argument is this, That he hath design'd Christ to be the Shepherd of the Church, *The great Shepherd of the sheep*; this is another Argument and evidence that he is reconciled to us, & that he is the *God of peace*: For when God gave Christ to be our Sacrifice, & raised him up to be our Shepherd, these are the most clear testimonies of his love: For, although Christ now sits in heaven, and *all the Angels of God worship him*, yet he doth not disdain to exercise the same care, and to express the same love to his people, that he did when he was upon earth. All the Offices of Christ express Gods love to us, for he feeds us as a *Prophet*, died for us as a *Priest*, governs and defends us as he is *King*; and all these meet together in this Title, feeding of us, dying for us, defending of us; as he was *God* he loved us, as he was *Man* he died for us. This doth express the effects of his

two Natures in this Title, and therefore an admirable evidence that God is at peace with us.

It follows, [*through the blood of the everlasting Covenant.*] The blood of Christ is that which cements God and us together : For you must remember, our *original peace* with God was broken, that peace we have with him now is called *Reconciliation* ; it is as a broken bone, which, well set, is stronger than before, because nature conveys most liberal supplies to the weakest part : so now, being reconciled to God through the blood of his Son, we stand upon surer terms with him than we did in Innocency : The *blood of Christ* speaks better things for us, than all our *sins* speak against us, it speaks peace to our souls, and that in heaven purchased by his death. Christ died as a *Testator*, and bequeathed to the Church a *Legacy of peace* ; he lives as the *Executor* of that Covenant, and now in heaven conveys to us that blessing of peace, which he bequeath'd in his death. And as our peace was founded in his *Blood*, so it is conserv'd by his *Intercession* ; he appears in the Court of Heaven as our Embassador, to make up all those differences which fall out between God and us : for you know, Amity and Friendship is kept between *Foreign States*, by their Residents and Agents that are kept in their several Courts ; so, we have an *Agent* in the Court of Heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, that was raised from the dead : And, as a Believer falls into sin, which is a breach of peace between God and us, so that peace is made up by the Exercise of Repentance on our part, and by sprinkling of Christ's blood upon us on Gods part. The renewed exercise of Repentance,

and application of Christ's blood, preserves that peace that is between God and Believers. And (to sum up the force of the Argument) when we had fallen from God, and it did not consist with the Majesty of God to make peace with us without satisfaction, then was he pleased to pay our Ransom out of his own Treasury, and redeem us by the blood of his Son, so that all his Attributes might shine forth in their lustre, and glory in our Salvation, and that upon sure terms we might be able to challenge an interest in his favour and love.

It follows, *Through the blood of the* [Everlasting Covenant.] Its call'd an *Everlasting Covenant* in two respects.

(1) In opposition to the *Old Covenant*, which was made with *Adam* in Innocency; but that Covenant which secures to us the reward of that *life eternal*, did not secure to us the Condition, that was *perfect obedience*: And in reference to this *Old Covenant*, sometimes the *Gospel* is called a *New Covenant*, sometimes a *Better Covenant*, because it supplies all weakness in the first Covenant; not as if the Law of God was weak or faulty in respect of it self, for the Law is *holy, just and good*, but weak in respect of us; for it is impossible that *that Covenant*, by the breach of which sin and death came into us, should reconcile us to God, and appease his anger; and therefore God contrived another Covenant for us, a Covenant in the Gospel, that was made with us in *Christ*, and this is called an *Everlasting Covenant*, because it remains for ever, the tenor of it shall not be chang'd; for, the first Covenant is only abrogated & made null, while frustrated as to the intent it was first given.

(2) Its

(2) Its call'd an *everlasting Covenant*, as it brings to those that are parties in it an *everlasting glory* : So the Lord Jesus his blood is called an *everlasting Redemption*, for it ransoms the souls of men from that *eternal death* to which they were liable, and gives them a title to *everlasting life* ; for this Covenant which now God hath made with us, it not only secures the *Reward*, but the *Conditions* to which the reward is made ; for God saith, *I will plant my fear in your hearts, that you shall not depart from me.*

I have now gone over the Title, and that in order to the Prayer, which follows, [*Make you perfect to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight,*] the general sum of it is this, That God of peace, who is reconciled to us in his Son, as he is the *Father of mercies* to us, so he is the *fountain of holiness* to us ; and in this respect we can only expect from him the *treasures of grace*, as he is the *God of peace*, for God, as he is our *Judge*, dispences to sinners nothing but revenge ; there is nothing to be expected but the curse of his Law, the execution of that Sentence of death from him. For although the world despise holiness as a base & contemptible thing, they had rather be *ungracious* than *inglorious* in the eyes of men, and upon this account they are afraid to be *holy*, least they should be the publick scorn & contempt of the place wherein they live : although holiness is of so low a price in the world, yet in Heaven, next to God, Christ, and the Spirit, Holiness is the most rich Jewel, *That*, God can bestow upon us, and therefore we must first look upon him as the *God of peace*, before we can beg any grace from him. And this is the reason why the Apostle represents God
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by these Titles, that he might encourage the Hebrews to believe God would grant this request. When Christ died for us, it was not his design only to quiet our consciences, but to quicken our souls; not only to free us from *damnation*, but from the *domination of sin*: And therefore you shall find these two joyned together, (*Tit. 2. 14.*) *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* The death of Christ, as there was a value in it to purchase Gods favour, so there was a vertue in it to restore to us Gods Image. And the account of his dying for us it is, that we must expect the least degree of grace and holiness from God. And this is the reason why the Apostle prefaces this, *Now God of peace, &c.*

I know you expect I should say something, as to my non-conformity. I shall only say thus much, It is neither fancy, faction, nor humor that makes me to comply, but meerly for fear of offending God. And if after the best means used for my Illumination, as prayer to God, discourse, study, I am not able to be satisfi'd concerning the lawfulness of what is required; if it be my unhappines to be in an error, surely *Men* will have no reason to be angry with me in this world. and I hope *God* will pardon me in the next.

FINIS.